

CD 2004-- 63/64

Wednesday, April 7, 2004
8 pm. MacMillan Theatre

University of Toronto
Faculty of Music
Presents

University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Raffi Armenian, conductor

PROGRAMME

Richard Wagner
(1813-1883)

Prelude and Good Friday Music from *Parsifal*

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D major, Op. 77

Allegro non troppo

Adagio

Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace

Amanda Goodburn, violin

INTERMISSION

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

Bogoroditsye Devo, Raduisya
(No. 6 from the *All-Night Vigil*, Op. 37)

Igor Stravinsky
(1882-1971)

Ave Maria

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Slava V Vyshnikh Bogu
(No. 7 from the *All-Night Vigil*, Op. 37)

Igor Stravinsky

Pater Noster
Agnus Dei (From *Mass*)

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Dnes Spaseniye Miru Byst
(No. 13 from the *All-Night Vigil*, Op. 37)

Elmer Iseler Singers
Trinity-St. Paul's United Church Choir
Brad Ratzlaff, graduate student conductor

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Te Deum

Elmer Iseler Singers
Jasmina Vucurovic, graduate student conductor

Igor Stravinsky

Symphony in C
Moderato alla breve
Larghetto concertante
Allegretto
Largo - Tempo giusto, alla breve

Raffi Armenian, conductor



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Programme Notes

Parsifal: Prelude and Good Friday Music

RICHARD WAGNER

Born in Leipzig, 1813

Died in Venice, 1883

By the time *Parsifal*, Richard Wagner's last opera, received its premiere in 1882, its composer had become more than an esteemed artist: he had developed a personality cult, and was perceived by many as a mystical visionary. Wagner embraced and cultivated his role, delving into various exotic religions – Norse mythology, of course, but also Buddhism, Sufism and other Eastern religions – to synthesize his own unique belief system. He disdained Christianity in all its conventional forms, and yet *Parsifal* is infused with the Christian idea of redemption. Addressing this apparent contradiction, he wrote, in a letter to a supporter: "Although we mercilessly relinquish the Church, Christianity, and even the whole phenomenon of Christianity in history, our friends must always know that we do it for the sake of that very same Christ." Similarly, he told his wife, Cosima, that although he did not believe in God, he did believe in *divinity*.

Parsifal was the product of decades of contemplation. Wagner probably first became acquainted with Wolfram von Eschenbach's Medieval poem about Sir Percival and the Knights of the Holy Grail

in 1845, when composing his opera *Lohengrin*. In 1854, he considered introducing a Parsifal character into his *Tristan und Isolde*. He first sketched out the libretto for a *Parsifal* opera in 1857, and made another draft in 1865, presenting it to his patron, King Ludwig II of Bavaria. In 1877 Wagner published the final version of the libretto and began to compose in earnest, completing the opera in 1882.

The Prelude introduces several "signature" leitmotifs, including musical representations of Holy Communion, the Grail and Faith. From a melodic and harmonic standpoint, it is a remarkably simple work – yet it is a masterpiece of orchestration, rich, lush and (with a few brassy outbursts) serene. It is often paired, in concert performances, with the Good Friday Music from Act III. Like the Prelude, this orchestral interlude is written in the grand sweep of Wagnerian endless melody. But unlike the Prelude, the Good Friday Music is more contrapuntal in its treatment of motivic material, until it finally dies away into a state of quiet bliss.

While much has been made of Hitler's enthusiasm for Wagner, it is interesting to note that in 1939, on the orders of Joseph Goebbels, performances of *Parsifal* were banned in Germany. Perhaps the opera's themes of compassion, suffering and self-sacrifice did not serve Nazi ideology very well. – *Colin Eatock*

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Born in Hamburg, 1833

Died in Vienna, 1897

In 1896 Johannes Brahms turned down an offer from the violinist Joseph Joachim to teach at Berlin's Könliche Hochschule für Musik (Royal College of Music), recently established under Joachim's direction. The reasons for this decision are not entirely clear: perhaps Brahms had become too attached to his adopted home of Vienna to move. Yet although Brahms declined Joachim's offer of employment, their long friendship eventually led to the composition of Brahms' only violin concerto, in 1878. Always solicitous of Joachim's advice – especially on matters concerning the violin – Brahms sent the virtuoso a copy of the first movement, with enough space between the staves for his friend to write in suggestions. (Brahms accepted some of Joachim's ideas, but rejected others.)

Musicologists have pointed out that the solo parts in Brahms' concertos tend to be highly integrated with the orchestra: Malcolm MacDonald has described these concertos as "veiled symphonies." The *Violin Concerto*, in particular, is often compared to Brahms' *Symphony No. 2*, written one year earlier, in its key structure and character. And like a symphony, this concerto initially had four movements, until Brahms withdrew two middle movements and wrote the Adagio that now stands at the centre of this work.

Throughout the expansive first movement, the violin alternates between presenting lyrical thematic material and accompanying the orchestra with scales and arpeggios. The solo part is demanding, technically speaking – full of double- and triple-stops, and often stratospheric in range – and particularly unusual is the way in which the orchestra "sneaks" back in, *pianissimo*, at the end of the cadenza. The second movement begins with an extended oboe solo. (Apparently, the virtuoso Pablo Sarasate once protested that he was not about to stand silently holding his violin

while an oboe played the theme.) However, the violin soon enters with an embellishment of the melody. A contrasting, harmonically adventurous section follows, before a return to the opening thematic material. The lively third movement displays Brahms' love of Hungarian music, and his penchant for metrically subversive rhythmic effects. Here, at last, the violin is dazzling – a *tour de force* for the soloist.

Joachim premiered this work on New Year's Day of 1879 in Leipzig, with a cadenza of his own composition (played tonight). Subsequently, cadenzas for this concerto were written by Leopold Auer, Fritz Kreisler and Jascha Heifetz, among others. – C.E.

Russian Sacred Choral Music

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Born in Oranienbaum, Russia, 1882

Died in New York, 1971

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

Born in Oneg, Russia, 1873

Died in Beverly Hills, 1943

The music of the Russian Orthodox Church had a profound effect on the sacred choral works of Sergei Rachmaninoff and Igor Stravinsky. Although both composers were heavily influenced by orthodox chant, their musical treatment of this liturgical form is a clear reflection of different compositional styles.

Rachmaninoff's *Vespers* were first performed in Moscow on March 10, 1915. Also known as *The All Night Vigil*, the fifteen selections which make up the *Vespers* were sung as part of a larger liturgical service. This special service took place on the evening before certain high holy days, (i.e. the Saturday before Easter Sunday).

Rachmaninoff based nine of the *Vespers* on ancient chant, while the other six melodies use stylistic traits of chant, what Rachmaninoff referred to as "conscious counterfeit". Of the three *vespers* sung tonight, two of them, No. 7 and No. 13, are based on Znamenny Chant

(sacred monophonic songs from fifteenth-century Russia). No. 6 is not based on a specific chant, but employs similar melodic and rhythmic inflections as No. 7 and No. 13.

Compositionally, the *Vespers* are the culmination of a long tradition in Russian liturgical music known as "choral orchestration". Musical characteristics of this style include wide dynamic ranges and rich harmonic color, especially in the lower voices.

In stark contrast, the sacred choral music of Stravinsky is characterized by its economy of means, clarity, objectivity, and a certain lack of "personal emotion". His sacred music, unlike Rachmaninoff's, has little dynamic contrast. The harmonic language is essentially modal, and the melodic range of each voice part is quite narrow.

Stravinsky's *Pater Noster* is based on the Orthodox chant, *Znamenny Rospev*, and the *Ave Maria* uses chant-like rhythmic and melodic motives. The *Agnus Dei* (from *Mass*) also has clear links to earlier musical forms, constantly making reference to medieval harmonic language with open fourths and fifths. Stravinsky's use of isorhythm (a repeated rhythmic pattern) is reminiscent of such early composers as Ockeghem and Machaut.

The compositional styles of Rachmaninoff and Stravinsky vary greatly. If the glowing red and gold of icons represent Rachmaninoff's liturgical music, then, as one author explains, it is the "grisaille (gray tones) of stained glass windows which reflect Stravinsky's sacred choral works." - Brad Ratzlaff

Te Deum HXXIIIc.2

JOSEPH HAYDN

Born in Rohrau, Austria, 1732

Died in Vienna, 1809

In 1794 the celebrated composer Joseph Haydn was the toast of London. Four years earlier, when his employer of three decades, Prince Nikolaus Esterházy died, the

prince's son, Paul Anton, wasted no time disbanding the expensive court orchestra and pensioning off Haydn. Free to do as he pleased, Haydn traveled to London, where he earned handsome fees as a freelance musician. So it must have come as a surprise to Haydn to learn, in the spring of 1794, that Paul Anton had also died, and that the next Esterházy heir (another Nikolaus) wanted him back. Dutifully, Haydn complied with this request, and returned to Austria.

The new prince, Nikolaus II, was particularly interested in church music; and for this reason Haydn devoted much time, following his return from England, to writing masses and other sacred works (he never wrote another symphony). One such work was this *Te Deum*, possibly composed in 1798, and probably undertaken at the request of the Austrian Empress. The earliest documented performance occurred in 1800, when the English Admiral Horatio Nelson was visiting the Esterházy's summer home, at Eisenstadt. Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* was also performed for the famous admiral's visit.

This *Te Deum* is a concise and generally vigorous setting of a fourth-century Latin hymn of praise. In setting the *Te Deum* to music, Haydn divided the text into three sections, molding the piece into a clear ABA form; and like the *Lord Nelson Mass*, the orchestra includes three trumpets and timpani, heard in the festive "A" sections only. The "B" section begins with a sudden transition to the minor key, and a dramatic slowing of tempo. Here, the words "pretioso sanguine" ("precious blood") are underscored through chromatically descending counterpoint, before a bold return to C major on the text: "Aeterna fac cum Sanctis tuis in gloria numerari" ("Make them be numbered with your Saints in glory everlasting). Other interesting features include an artfully disguised quotation of the Gregorian *Te Deum* chant at the beginning of the piece; and, towards the work's end, a miniature double fugue on

the words "In te Domine speravi" ("O Lord in you have I trusted").

For reasons that remain a mystery, after Haydn's death, the *Te Deum* lay forgotten for one and a half centuries. It received its first modern performance in 1958, thanks to the British Broadcasting Corporation. - C.E.

Symphony in C

IGOR FEODOROVICH STRAVINSKY

Born in Oranienbaum, Russia, 1882

Died in New York, 1971

Between the two world wars, Igor Stravinsky established himself as Europe's leading modernist composer; and through tours and commissions, he also made himself well known in the USA. His first trip to the United States was in 1925, and he returned in 1935 and in 1937 – a tour that began with a chilly January in Toronto. In 1930 the conductor Serge Koussevitzky asked Stravinsky to compose his *Symphony of Psalms*; and also in the 1930s he was commissioned by the American Ballet to write *Jeu de Cartes*, and by Washington arts patron Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss to compose the *Dumbarton Oaks Concerto*. So it is understandable that Stravinsky looked overseas when the clouds of World War II loomed: three weeks after Germany invaded Poland, he embarked for America. As well, the deaths of his daughter, wife and mother in 1938-39 may possibly have contributed to his willingness to leave Europe.

The *Symphony in C* belongs to this period of upheaval in Stravinsky's life. Begun in 1938 and completed in 1940, the first movement was written in Paris, the second in the French town of Sancellemoz, the third in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the final movement in Beverly Hills, California. Stravinsky always maintained that there were discernable stylistic differences distinguishing the various movements, based upon where they were composed. Be that as it may, this work belongs to his neo-classical period, when he developed an interest in pre-romantic genres and forms – in this case, the 18th-century symphony. The key of C major serves, in the words of musicologist Paul Griffiths, as an "ironic tonic."

The first movement owes much to classical sonata form. Metrically it is quite stable (for Stravinsky), although there are some clever cross-rhythmic effects. Clear textures predominate – often with a simple melody in the winds, as the strings vigorously chug along beneath. An oboe solo begins the second movement, a tender tune that recalls the composer's love of Pergolesi. Throughout, this movement is stately and ceremonial, but also decorative and ornate. The third movement, a scherzo, is boisterous and metrically complex, driving relentlessly to an unexpected *tranquillo* ending. The last movement, in which metrical stability is restored, alternates between a kind of ominous chorale texture and intense *allegro* passages. - Copyright Colin Eatock 2004



Texts and Translations

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF
From the All-Night Vigil

No. 6

Bogoroditse Devo, raduysia,
Blagodatnaya Mariye, Ghospod s Toboyu.
Blagoslovenna Ti v zhenah,
I blagosloven Plod chreva Tvoyego,
Yako Spasa rodila yesi dush nashih.

No. 7

Slava v vishnih Bogu
I na zemli mir,
V chelovetseh blagovoleniye.
Ghospodi, ustne moi otverzeshi
I usta moya vozvestiat hvalu Tvoyu

No. 13

Dnes spaseniye miru bist,
Poyem Voskresshemu iz groba
I Nachalniku zhizni nasheya:
Razrushiv bo smertiye smert,
Pobedu dade nam I veliyu milost.

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Ave Maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena:
Dominus tecum,
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
Et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

Pater Noster

Pater Noster, qui es in caelis:
Sanctificetur nomen tuum.

Adveniat regnum tuum,
Fiat voluntas tua, sicut
in caelo, et in terra.

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie.

No. 6

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos,
Mary full of grace, the Lord is with Thee.
Blessed art Thou among women,
And blessed is the Fruit of Thy womb,
For Thou hast borne the Saviour of our
souls.

No. 7

Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
good will among men.
Lord, open Thou my lips,
And my mouth shall proclaim Thy praise.

No. 13

Today salvation has come to the world.
Let us sing to Him who rose from the dead,
The Author of our life.
Having destroyed death by death,
He has given us the victory and great
mercy.

Ave Maria

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with
thee,
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Pater Noster

Our Father, who art in heaven:
Hallowed be thy name:

Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Et dimitte nobis debita nostra,
Sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.

Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.
Et libera nos a malo. Amen.

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:
miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona
nobis pacem.

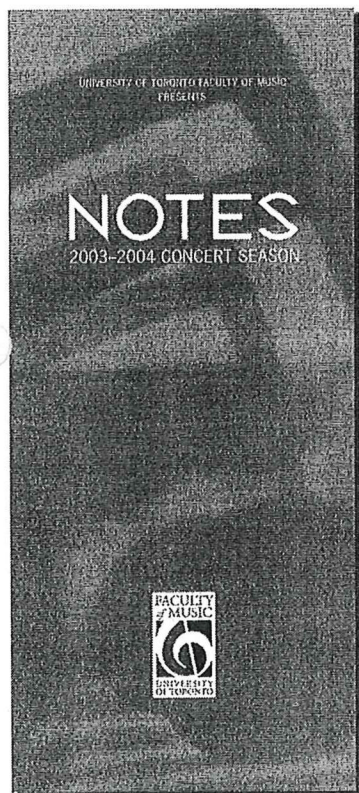
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our
debtors.

And lead us not into temptation.
But deliver us from the evil one. Amen

Agnus Dei

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of
the world,
Have mercy upon us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of
the world,
Grant us peace.



NOTES

2004-2005

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Biographies

Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Toronto, **RAFFI ARMENIAN** was trained in the European tradition. In Vienna he studied piano, conducting, voice and composition with Bruno Seidlhofer, Hans Swarowsky, Ferdinand Grossmann and Alfred Uhl respectively.

Maestro Armenian has conducted a television version of Menotti's *The Medium* which was nominated for an Emmy Award that season. He received a Juno nomination for a recording of Ravel and Schoenberg with one of Canada's great singers, Maureen Forrester, and the Canadian Chamber Ensemble, which he founded. In 1988, The CCE was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque from the Canadian Music Council for its *Serenades* album, which was subsequently nominated for a Juno Award. Repertoire from the Ensemble's *Music from Berlin in the 1920s* was selected by Woody Allen to underscore his film *Shadows and Fog*.

Sought after as a guest conductor, Mr. Armenian has led the Belgian Radio Orchestra, the Enescu Philharmonic of Bucharest at the Ravenna International Music Festival, the Montreal Symphony, the Winnipeg Symphony, the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, l'Orchestre symphonique de Québec, the Edmonton Symphony, the Hamilton Philharmonic and Violon du Roy.

Maestro Armenian held the position of Music Director of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony for 22 years and worked with such illustrious companies as the Canadian Opera Company, Michigan Opera Theater, l'Opéra de Montréal, Opera Columbus and for the famed Indiana University School of Music. Kitchener-Waterloo's acoustically superb "Centre in the Square" has a main theatre named Raffi Armenian Theatre. The design was strongly influenced by Maestro Armenian.

The Armenian legacy is secured by his highly acclaimed performance of Wagner's *Parsifal* in which tenor Jon Vickers made his final appearance in 1989. He recently

conducted *La Belle Hélène* at l'Opéra de Québec and Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with Opera Hamilton. Mr. Armenian is a recipient of the Order of Canada and Honorary Doctorates from Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo.

Before moving to Canada in the summer of 2001, **AMANDA GOODBURN** pursued her studies in both England and South Africa, where she distinguished herself as a critically acclaimed young violinist. Amanda performed with the major South African orchestras, and was the winner of the Samro and Sasol National music competitions. These successes, in addition to a full scholarship, enabled her to continue her graduate studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Having achieved a distinction for the RNCM's highest performance diploma, Amanda visited Canada, intending only to attend the summer masterclasses at Banff. Nearly three years later, she still hasn't left, and is now working towards towards a Masters degree at the University of Toronto under the guidance of Erika Raum.

Amanda has performed with Arraymusic, the Mooredale and ARC Ensembles, and with the Tokai String Quartet, which was awarded the Faculty of Music's Felix Galimir Chamber Music Award in 2003. She was recently awarded a position with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

BRAD RATZLAFF is a graduate of the University of Toronto and the University of Winnipeg with degrees in Education and Music. He holds Associate degrees from the Royal Conservatory of Music and The Royal Canadian College of Organists.

Brad is a former member of several professional choirs, including the Concertgebuow Choir of Amsterdam, The Elora Festival Singers, and the Elmer Iseler Singers. He has studied voice with Gary Relyea, piano with Ruth Watson

Henderson, and choral conducting with Jon Washburn, Leonard Ratzlaff, the late Dr. Elmer Iseler, Helmuth Rilling, and Dr. Doreen Rao.

An organ student of John Tuttle, Brad Ratzlaff is the recipient of a choral conducting scholarship from the Royal Canadian College of Organists.

Brad is Music Director and Organist of Trinity-St. Paul's United Church, the Founder and Artistic Director of the Trinity-St. Paul's Vocal Concert Series, and is the accompanist for VIVA! Youth Singers of Toronto.

JASMINA VUCUROVIC holds a Master of Music degree in piano performance from the University of Belgrade and is currently enrolled in the Master's program in instrumental conducting at the University of Toronto, studying with Raffi Armenian. Professionally, Jasmina has worked as a vocal coach and rehearsal pianist for the Canadian Opera Company and Opera Atelier. She is the founding director of "Kir Stefan Srbini" Choir, which specializes in Slavonic sacred music. As a pianist and conductor Jasmina has performed in Canada, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. Most recently, Jasmina participated in the conducting master class with Helmuth Rilling at the inaugural Bach Festival at the University of Toronto.

The **ELMER ISELER SINGERS**, a twenty-voice professional chamber choir based in Toronto, has built an enviable international reputation since its debut performance in 1979. Now conducted by Lydia Adams, the group was founded by and nurtured under the direction of the late Dr. Elmer Iseler, the "Dean of Canadian Choral Conductors." This celebrated choir

has performed throughout Canada and the United States as well as internationally. With repertoire that spans 500 years of choral music, the Elmer Iseler Singers are known for their flawless technique and wide interpretive range. The choir regularly commissions and performs new works, and is frequently involved in radio and television broadcasts and a variety of recording projects.

The Elmer Iseler Singers have appeared at several national and international festivals, including the Canada in Holland Festival, the Joy of Singing International Choral Festival in Toronto, Festival 500 in Newfoundland, the Festival of the Sound, Parry Sound, and most recently at the Sixth World Symposium on Choral Music in Minneapolis, USA. They are highly valued for their contributions to master classes and workshops for schools and community choirs. The Singers are the professional Choir-In-Residence at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music.

THE TRINITY-ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH CHOIR provides service music every Sunday to the congregation of Trinity-St. Paul's, a church located in downtown Toronto.

In addition to their regular duties on Sunday morning, the choir performs larger choral works for special services, and presents an annual concert as part of the Trinity-St. Paul's Vocal Concert Series. Most recently, the choir performed Bach's *St. John Passion*, *Missa Gaia* with guest artist Paul Halley, and Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. As a result of the successful production of *Missa Gaia*, the choir has been invited to perform the work at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City.

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